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War and the 4th International

Draft Theses Adopted by the International Secretariat of the International Communist League

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Communist League of America (opposition)

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Introduction

These theses are appearing just at the time when the war danger is coming to a head in Europe in ever more threatening form. The disarmament conference has become the battle ground for the conclusion of new military alliances. Mussolini and General Weygand are appealing for an increase in armaments. Yesterday Austria was the crucible for the new world carnage, today it is the Saar and Manchuria. In the whole world nothing is so much the topic of conversation as air mobilization, the reinforcement of the air and sea fleets, chemical warfare, industrial mobilization, etc.

The war danger imposes upon us tremendous duties and responsibilities. First of all the duty of preparing and organizing the ideological struggle against war, a duty which is all the greater for the fact that both the Second and Third Internationals are today only obstacles in the struggle against war.

The patriotic leaders of the Second International are again preparing, as in 1914, as faithful servants of Imperialism to provide the cannon fodder for the coming war.

The leaders of the impotent Third International are misleading the masses, inasmuch as they are replacing mobilization against war by clamorous masquerade congresses.

The struggle against war must be conducted in spite of the two Internationals and against them. This struggle must be given a new basis, a new banner—the banner of the Fourth International. Be the cadres of the Fourth International ever so few in number, the correctness and clarity of their policy and determination will enable them to play a decisive role. Remember Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg!

The question of the imperialist war and the preparation for it is the central question of the day. The struggle against the imperialist war is the focal point of the process of differentiation in the working class. The character of the Reformist and Centrist organizations will be exposed in this struggle; the cadres of the Bolshevik-Leninists, however, will be steeled in it.

Only those comrades who seriously and critically study these theses will be adequately armed for political work against the war. Yet study, discussion, criticism of the theses, useful as they are, do not suffice. It is the struggle that will decide! In the everyday class struggle we must fight in the spirit of the theses, in the spirit of the unswerving, revolutionary internationalism, in the spirit of Lenin.

These theses have already been published as a draft in January 1934 in our periodical "Problemes et Discussions" in the French language after making a number of additions and improvements.

In this spirit we present the theses to the proletarian public.

Geneva, June 10, 1934. INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT.

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War and the 4th International

The catastrophic commercial, industrial, agrarian and financial crisis, the break in international economic ties, the decline of the productive forces of humanity, the unbearable sharpening of class and international contradictions mark the twilight of capitalism and fully confirm the Leninist characterization of our epoch as one of *war and revolutions*.

The war of 1914-1918 officially ushered in a new epoch. Its most important political events up to now have been: the conquest of power by the Russian proletariat in 1917 and the smashing of the German proletariat in the year 1933. The terrible calamities of the peoples in all parts of the world and even the more terrible dangers which tomorrow holds in store result from the fact that the revolution of 1917 did not find victorious development on the European and world arena.

Inside the individual countries the historic blind alley of capitalism expresses itself in chronic unemployment, in the lowering of the living standards of the workers, in the ruination of the peasantry and the town petty bourgeoisie, in the decomposition and decay of the parliamentary state, in the monstrous poisoning of the people by "social" and "national" demagogy in face of an actual liquidation of social reforms, of the pushing aside and replacement of old ruling parties by a naked military-police apparatus (*Bonapartism*, of capitalist decline), in the growth of fascism, in its conquering power and smashing of each and every proletarian organization.

On the world arena the same processes are washing away the last remnants of stability in international relations, driving every conflict between the states to the very edge of the knife, laying bare the futility of pacifist attempts, giving rise to the growth of armaments on a new and higher technical basis and thus leading to a new imperialist war. Fascism is its most consistent artificer and organizer.

On the other hand, the exposure of the thoroughly reactionary, putrified and robber nature of modern capitalism, the destruction of democracy, reformism and pacifism, the urgent and burning need of the proletariat to find a safe path away from imminent disaster put the international revolution on the order of the day with renewed force. Only the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the

insurgent proletariat can save humanity from a new devastating slaughter of the peoples.

Preparation for a New War

1. The same causes, inseparable from modern capitalism, which brought about the last imperialist war have now reached infinitely greater tension than in the middle of 1914. The fear of the consequences of a new war is the only factor which fetters the will of imperialism. But the efficacy of this brake is limited. The stress of inner contradictions pushes one country after another on the road to fascism which, in its turn, cannot maintain power except by preparing international explosions. All governments fear war. But none of the governments has any freedom of choice. Without a proletarian revolution a new world war is inevitable.

2. Europe, the recent arena of the greatest of wars continually heads toward decline, pushed by victors and vanquished alike. The League of Nations which according to its official program was to be the "organizer of peace" and which was really intended to perpetuate the Versailles system, to neutralize the hegemony of the United States and to create a bulwark against the Red East, could not withstand the impact of imperialist contradictions. Only the most cynical of the social-patriots (Henderson, Vandervelde, Jouhaux and others) still try to connect the perspectives of disarmament and pacifism with the League. In reality the League of Nations became a secondary figure on the chessboard of imperialist combinations. The main work of diplomacy, now carried on behind the back of Geneva, consists in the search for military allies, that is, in a feverish preparation for a new slaughter. Parallel with it goes the constant growth of armaments to which fascist Germany has lent a new and gigantic impulsion.

3. The collapse of the League of Nations is indissolubly bound up with the beginning of the collapse of French hegemony on the European continent. The demographic and economic power of *France* proved to be, as was to be expected, too narrow a base for the Versailles system. French imperialism armed to the teeth and having an apparently "defensive" character, insofar as it is forced to defend by legalized agreements the fruits of its plunder and spoliation, remains essentially one of the most important factors of a new war.

Driven by its unbearable contradictions and the consequences of defeat, *German capitalism* has been forced to tear off the straitjacket of democratic pacifism and now comes forward as the chief

threat to the Versailles system. State combinations on the European continent still follow in the main the line of victors and vanquished. *Italy* occupies the place of a treacherous go-between, ready to sell its friendship at the decisive moment to the stronger side, as she did during the last war. *England* is attempting to retain its "independence",—a mere shadow of its former "splendid isolation",—in the hope of utilizing the antagonisms in Europe, the contradictions between Europe and America, the approaching conflicts in the Far East. But ruling England is ever less successful in its scheming designs. Terrified by the disintegration of its empire, by the revolutionary movement in India, by the instability of its positions in China, the British bourgeoisie covers up with the revolting hypocrisy of MacDonald and Henderson its greedy and cowardly policy of waiting and maneuvring which, in turn, is one of the main sources of today's general instability and tomorrow's catastrophies.

4. The war and the post-war period wrought the greatest changes in the internal and international position of the *U. S. A.* The gigantic economic superiority of the U.S.A. over Europe and consequently over the world, allowed the bourgeoisie of the United States to appear in the first post-war period as a dispassionate "conciliator", defender of the "freedom of the seas" and the "open door". The industrial and business crisis revealed, however, with terrific force the disturbance of the old economic equilibrium which had found sufficient support on the internal market. This road is completely exhausted.

Of course, the economic superiority of the U. S. A. has not disappeared, on the contrary, it has even grown potentially due to the further disintegration of Europe. But the old forms in which this superiority manifested itself (industrial technique, trade balance, stable dollar, European indebtedness) have lost their actuality: the advanced technique is no longer put to use, the trade balance is unfavorable, the dollar is in decline, debts are not paid. The superiority of the U. S. A. must find its expression in new forms, the way to which can be opened only by war.

The slogan of the "open door" in China is proving powerless before a few Japanese divisions. Washington carries on its Far Eastern policy in such a way as to be able to provoke at the most propitious moment a military clash between the U. S. S. R. and Japan, so as to weaken both Japan and the U. S. S. R. and outline its further strategic plan depending upon the outcome of war. Continuing by inertia the discussion on the liberation of the

Phillipines, the American imperialists are in reality preparing to establish for themselves a territorial base in *China*, so as to raise at the following stage, in case of conflict with Great Britain, the question of the "liberation" of *India*. U. S. capitalism is up against the same problems that pushed Germany of 1914 on the path of war. The world is divided? It must be re-divided. For Germany it was a question of "organizing Europe". The United States must "organize" the world. History is bringing humanity face to face with the volcanic eruption of American imperialism.

5. Belated *Japanese* capitalism, feeding on the juices of backwardness, poverty and barbarism, is being driven by unbearable internal ulcers and abscesses on the road of unceasing piratical plunder. The absence of an industrial base of its own and the extreme precariousness of the whole social system makes Japanese capitalism the most aggressive and unbridled. However, the future will show that behind this greedy aggressiveness there are but few real forces. Japan may be the first to give the signal to war; but from semi-feudal Japan, torn by all the contradictions that beset Czarist Russia, sooner than from other countries, the call to revolution may sound.

6. It would be too venturesome, however, to predict precisely where and when the first shot will be fired. Under the influence of the Soviet-American agreement, as well as of internal difficulties, Japan may temporarily retreat. But the same circumstances may, on the contrary, force the Japanese military camarilla to hasten the blow while there is yet time. Will the French government make up its mind to a "preventive" war and will this war not turn, with the aid of Italy, into a free-for-all? Or on the contrary, while waiting and maneuvring, will not France under the pressure of England take the road of agreement with Hitler, thereby opening up to him the road of attack to the East?

Will not the Balkan peninsula be once more the instigator of war? Or will the initiative, perhaps, be seized this time by Danubian countries? The multitude of factors and the intertwining of conflicting forces exclude the possibility of a concrete prognosis. But the general tendency of development is absolutely clear: the post-war period has simply been transformed into an interval between two wars and this interval is vanishing before our very eyes. Planned, corporative or state capitalism which goes hand in hand with the Authoritarian, Bonapartist or Fascist state, remains a utopia and a lie insofar as it sets itself the official task of a harmonious national economy on the basis of private property.

But it is a menacing reality insofar as it is a question of concentrating all the economic forces of the nation for the preparation of a new war. This work is proceeding now with full steam. A new great war is knocking at the gates. It will be crueler, more destructive than its predecessor. *This very fact makes the attitude towards the oncoming war the pivotal question of proletarian policy.*

U. S. S. R. and Imperialist War

7. Taken on a historic scale the antagonism between world imperialism and the Soviet Union is infinitely deeper than the antagonisms which set individual capitalist countries in opposition to each other. But the class contradiction between the workers' state and the capitalist states varies in acuteness depending upon the evolution of the workers' state and upon the changes in the world situation. The monstrous development of Soviet bureaucratism and the difficult conditions of existence of the toiling masses have drastically decreased the attractive power of the U. S. S. R. with regard to the working class of the world. The heavy defeats of the Comintern and the national-pacifist foreign policy of the Soviet government in their turn could not but diminish the apprehensions of the world bourgeoisie. Finally, the new sharpening of internal contradictions of the capitalist world forces the governments of Europe and America to approach the U. S. S. R. at this stage not from the point of view of the principal question: capitalism or socialism, but from the point of view of the conjunctural role of the Soviet state in the struggle of the imperialist powers. Non-aggression pacts, the recognition of the U. S. S. R. by the Washington government, etc., are manifestations of this international situation. Hitler's persistent efforts to legalize the re-arming of Germany by pointing to the "Eastern danger" find no response as yet, especially on the part of France and its satellites, precisely because the revolutionary danger of communism, despite the terrible crisis, has lost its acuteness. *The diplomatic successes of the Soviet Union* are therefore to be attributed, at least in a large measure, to the extreme weakening of the international revolution.

8. It would be a fatal mistake, however, to consider the armed intervention against the Soviet Union as entirely off the order of the day. If the conjunctural relations have become less sharp, there remain in full force the contradictions of social systems. The continual decline of capitalism will drive the bourgeois governments to radical decisions. Every big war, irrespective of its

initial motives, must pose squarely the question of military intervention against the U. S. S. R. in order to transfuse fresh blood into the sclerotic veins of capitalism.

The indubitable and deep-going bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet state as well as the national-conservative character of its foreign policy do not change the social nature of the Soviet Union as that of the first workers' state. All kinds of democratic, idealistic, ultra-left, anarchistic theories, ignoring the character of Soviet property relations which is socialistic in its tendencies and denying or glossing over the class contradiction between the U. S. S. R. and the bourgeois state must lead inevitably, and especially in case of war, to counter-revolutionary political conclusions.

Defense of the Soviet Union from the blows of the capitalist enemies, irrespective of the circumstances and immediate causes of the conflict, is the elementary and imperative duty of every honest labor organization.

"National Defense"

9. *The national state* created by capitalism in the struggle with the sectionalism of the Middle Ages became the classical arena of capitalism. But no sooner did it take shape than it became a brake upon economic and cultural development. The contradiction between the productive forces and the framework of the national state, in conjunction with the principal contradiction —between the productive forces and the private ownership of the means of production—make the crisis of capitalism that of the world social system.

10. If state borders could be swept away with one stroke, productive forces, even under capitalism, could continue to rise for a certain length of time—at the price of innumerable sacrifices, it is true—to a higher level. With the abolition of private ownership of the means of production, the productive forces may, as the experience of the U. S. S. R. shows, reach a higher development even within the framework of one state. But only the abolition of private property as well as of state barriers between nations can create the conditions for a new economic system: *the socialist society.*

11. The defense of the national state, first of all in Balkanized Europe—the cradle of the national state—is in the full sense of the word a *reactionary task.* The national state with its borders, passports, monetary system, customs and the army for the protection of customs has become a frightful impediment to the economic and

cultural development of humanity. Not the defense of the national state is the task of the proletariat but its complete and final lliquidation.

12. Were the present national state to represent a progressive factor, it would have to be defended irrespective of its political form and of course regardless of who "started" the war first. It is absurd to confuse the question of the historic function of the national state with the question of the "guilt" of a given government. Can one refuse to save a house suited for habitation just because the fire started through carelessness or through evil intent of the owner? But here it is precisely a case of the given house being *fit not for living but merely for dying.* To enable the peoples to live the structure of the national state must be razed to its foundations.

13. A "socialist" who preaches national defense is a petty bourgeois reactionary at the service of decaying capitalism. Not to bind itself to the national state in time of war, to follow not the war map but the map of the class struggle, is possible only for that party which has already declared irreconcilable war on the national state in time of peace. Only by realizing fully the objectively reactionary role of the imperialist state, can the proletarian vanguard become invulnerable to all types of social patriotism. This means that a real break with the ideology and policy of "national defense" is possible only from the standpoint of the *international proletarian revolution.*

The National Question and Imperialist War

14. The working class is not indifferent to its *nation.* On the contrary, just because history places the fate of the nation into its hands, the working class refuses to entrust the work of national freedom and independence to imperialism which "saves" the nation only to subject it on the morrow to new mortal dangers for the sake of the interests of an insignificant minority of exploiters.

15. Having used the nation for its development, capitalism has nowhere, in no single corner of the world, solved fully the national problem. The borders of the Europe of Versailles are carved out of the living body of the nations. The idea of recarving capitalist Europe to make state boundaries coincide with national boundaries is the sheerest kind of utopia. No government will cede an inch of its ground by peaceful means. A new war would carve Europe anew in accordance with the war map and not in correspondence to the boundaries of nations. The task of complete national determination and peaceful cooperation of all peoples of

Europe can be solved only on the basis of the economic unification of Europe, purged of bourgeois rule. The slogan of the *United States of Europe* is a slogan not only for the salvation of the Balkan and Danubian peoples but for the salvation of the peoples of Germany and France as well.

16. A special and important place is occupied by the question of *colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East* which are even now fighting for the independent national state. Their struggle is doubly progressive: tearing the backward peoples from Asiatism, sectionalism and foreign bondage, they strike powerful blows at the imperialist states. But it must be clearly understood beforehand that the belated revolutions in Asia and Africa are incapable of opening up a new epoch of renaissance for the national state. The liberation of the colonies will be merely a gigantic episode in the world socialist revolution, just as the belated democratic overturn in Russia, which was also a semi-colonial country, was only the introduction to the socialist revolution.

17. In *South America* where belated and already decaying capitalism is supporting the conditions of semi-feudal, that is semi-slavish existence, world antagonisms create a sharp struggle of compradore cliques, continual overturns within the states and protracted armed conflicts between the states. The American bourgeoisie which was able during its historic rise to unite into one federation the Northern half of the American continent now uses all its power which grew out of this to disunite, weaken and enslave its Southern half. South and Central America will be able to tear themselves out of backwardness and enslavement only by uniting all their states into one powerful federation. But not the belated South-American bourgeoisie, a thoroughly venal agency of foreign imperialism, will be called upon to solve this task, but the young South-American proletariat, as the chosen leader of the oppressed masses. The slogan in the struggle against violence and intrigues of world imperialism and against the bloody work of native compradore cliques is therefore: the *Soviet United States of South and Central America.*

The national problem merges everywhere with the social. Only the conquest of power by the world proletariat can assure a real and lasting freedom of development for *all* nations of our planet.

The Defense of Democracy

18. The sham of national defense is covered up wherever possible by the additional sham of the *defense of democracy.* If even now, in the imperialist epoch, Marxists do not identify

democracy with fascism and are ready at any moment to repel fascism's encroachment upon democracy, must not the proletariat in case of war support the democratic governments against the fascist governments?

Flagrant sophism! We defend democracy against fascism by means of the organizations and methods of the proletariat. Contrary to social democracy, we do not entrust this defense to the bourgeois state ("Staat, greif zu!"). And if we remain in irreconcilable opposition to the most "democratic" government in time of peace, how can we take upon ourselves even a shadow of responsibility for it in time of war when all the infamies and crimes of capitalism take on a most brutal and bloody form?

19. A modern war between the great powers does not signify a conflict between democracy and fascism but a struggle of two imperialisms for the re-division of the world. Moreover, the war must inevitably assume an international character and in both camps will be found fascist (semi-fascist, bonapartist, etc.) as well as "democratic" states. The republican form of French imperialism did not prevent it from basing itself in peacetime on the military-bourgeois dictatorship in Poland, Jugoslavia and Roumania, as it will not prevent it, in case of necessity, from restoring the Austro-Hungarian monarchy as a barrier against the unification of Austria with Germany. Finally, in France itself, parliamentary democracy, already sufficiently weakened today, would undoubtedly one of the first victims of war if it is not upset before its start.

20. The bourgeoisie of a number of civilized countries has already shown and is continuing to show how, in case of internal danger, it changes without much ado the parliamentary form of its rule for an authoritarian, dictatorial, Bonapartist or a fascist form. It will make the change that much faster and more decisively in time of war when both internal and external dangers will threaten its basic class interests with ten-fold force. Under these conditions the support by a workers' party of "its" national imperialism for the sake of a fragile democratic shell *means the renunciation of an independent policy and the chauvinistic demoralization of the workers,* that is, the destruction of the only factor which can save humanity from disaster.

21. "The struggle for democracy" in time of war would signify above all the struggle for the preservation of the workers' press and of workers' organizations against unbridled military censorship and military authority. On the basis of these tasks the revolutionary vanguard will seek a united front with other working

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class organizations—*against its own "democratic" government,* but in no case unity with its own government against the hostile country.

22. An imperialist war stands above the question of the state form of capitalist rule. It places before each national bourgeoisie the question of the fate of national capitalism and before the bourgeoisie of all countries—the question of the fate of capitalism in general. Only thus must the proletariat too pose the question: *capitalism or socialism,* the triumph of one of the imperialist camps or the proletarian revolution.

Defense of Small and Neutral States

23. The concept of national defense, especially when it coincides with the idea of the defense of democracy, can most easily delude the workers of small and neutral countries (Switzerland, partly Belgium, Scandinavian countries . . .) which, being incapable of engaging in an independent policy of conquest, impart to the defense of their national borders the character of an irrefutable and absolute dogma. But precisely by the example of Belgium we see how naturally formal neutrality is replaced by a system of imperialist pacts, and how inevitably war for "national defense" leads to an annexationist peace. The character of war is determined not by the initial episode taken by itself ("violation of neutrality", "enemy invasion", etc.) but by the main moving forces of war, by its whole development and by the consequences to which it finally leads.

24. It can be readily accepted that the Swiss bourgeoisie will not take upon itself the initiative of war. In this sense it has far more formal right than any other bourgeoisie to speak of its *defensive position.* But from the moment that Switzerland may find itself drawn into the war by the course of events it would enter the struggle of the world powers in the pursuit of equally imperialist aims. Should neutrality be violated, the Swiss bourgeoisie will unite with the stronger of the two attacking sides, regardless of which bears the greater responsibility for the violation of neutrality, and in which camp there is more "democracy". Thus, during the last war Belgium, the ally of Czarism, by no means left the camp of the Allies when in the course of the war they in turn found it advantageous to violate the neutrality of Greece.

Only a hopelessly dull bourgeois from a god-forsaken Swiss village (like Robert Grimm) can seriously think that the world war into which he is drawn is waged for the defense of Swiss

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independence. Just as the preceding war swept away the neutrality of Belgium so the new war will leave no trace of Swiss independence. Whether after the war Switzerland will retain its entity as a state even though without its independence, or whether it will be divided among Germany, France and Italy depends on a number of European and world factors among which the "national defense" of Switzerland will occupy an insignificant place.

We see therefore that for neutral, democratic Switzerland also, a state possessing no colonies and where the idea of national defense appears before us in its purest form, the laws of imperialism make no exception. To the demand of the bourgeoisie: "Join the policy of national defense", the Swiss proletariat must retort by a policy of *class defense* so as to go over next to a revolutionary advance.

The Second International and War

25. The commandment of *national defense* follows from the dogma that the national solidarity of classes stands above the class struggle. In reality no possessing class ever recognized the defense of the fatherland as such, that is, under any and all conditions, but rather covered up by this formula the protection of its privileged position in the fatherland. Overthrown ruling classes always become "defeatists"; that is, are ready to restore their privileged position with the aid of foreign arms.

The oppressed classes, not conscious of their own interests and used to sacrifices, accept the slogan "national defense" at face value; that is, as an absolute duty which stands above the classes. Te basic historic crime of the parties of the Second International consists in their fostering and strengthening the *slavish habits and traditions of the oppressed,* in neutralizing their revolutionary indignation and falsifying their class consciousness with the aid of patriotic ideas.

If the European proletariat did not overthrow the bourgeoisie at the end of the great war; if humanity writhes now in the agonies of the crisis; if a new war threatens to transform cities and villages into heaps of ruins,—the chief responsibility for these crimes and calamities falls on the Second International.

26. The policy of social-patriotism rendered the masses *helpless before fascism.* If in time of war it is necessary to reject the class struggle for the sake of national interests, it is also necessary to renounce "Marxism" in the epoch of a great economic crisis which endangers "the nation" no less than war. Baek in April

1915 Rosa Luxemburg exhausted this question with the following words: "Either the class struggle is the imperative law of proletarian existence also during war . . . or the class *struggle is a crime against national interests and the safety of the fatherland* also in time of peace." The idea of "national interests" and the "safety of the fatherland" has been transformed by fascism into chains and fetters for the proletariat.

27. *The German social democracy* supported Hitler's foreign policy up to the very moment that he drove it out. The final replacement of democracy by fascism revealed that social democracy remains patriotic just so long as the political regime assures it its profits and privileges. Finding themselves in emigration, the former Hohenzollern patriots turn about face and are ready to welcome a preventive war of the French bourgeoisie against Hitler. Without any difficulty the Second International amnestied Wels & Co. who would on the morrow be reconverted into ardent patriots if only the German bourgeoisie should beckon them back with one little finger.

28. The *French, Belgian and other socialists* responded to the German events by an open alliance with their own bourgeoisie on the question of "national defense". While official France was carrying on a "small", "insignificant" but exceptionally atrocious war against Morocco, the French social democracy and reformist trade unions discussed at their congresses the inhumanity of war *in general,* having in mind thereby chiefly the war of revenge on the part of Germany. Parties which support the brutalities of colonial robberies, where it is merely a question of new profits, will support with eyes shut any national government in a great war where the fate of the bourgeois republic itself will be involved.

29. The incompatibility of social-democratic policy with the historic interests of the proletariat is incomparably deeper and sharper now than on the eve of the imperialist war. The struggle with the patriotic prejudices of the masses means above all an irreconcilable *struggle against the Second International* as an organization, as a party, as a program, as a banner.

Centrism and War

30. The first imperialist war completely dissolved the Second International as a *revolutionary* party and thereby created the necessity and possibility of creating the Third International. But the republican "revolution" in Germany and Austro-Hungary, the democratization of suffrage in a number of countries, concessions

by the frightened European bourgeoisie in the sphere of social legislation in the first years after the war—all this, in conjunction with the disastrous policy of the epigones of Leninism, gave the Second International a considerable respite—no longer as a revolutionary but as a conservative-liberal workers' party of pacific reform. However, very soon—finally with the coming of the last world crisis—all the possibilities on the road of reforms proved exhausted. The bourgeoisie passed over to counter attack. The social-democracy treacherously gave up one gain after another. All species of reformism—parliamentarian, trade union, municipal, cooperative "socialism"—have suffered irreparable bankruptcies and catastrophies in recent years. As a result of this, the preparation for a new war finds the Second International with a broken spine. The social-democratic parties are undergoing an intensive process of discoloration. Consistent reformism takes on new color, it becomes silent or splits off. Its place is being taken by *various shadings of centrism* either in the form of numerous fractions within the old parties, or as independent organizations.

31. On the question of the defense of the fatherland *masked reformists and right centrists* (Leon Blum, Henri de Man, Robert Grimm, Martin Tranmael, Otto Bauer, and others) resort increasingly to diplomatic, confused, conditional formulations calculated at one and the same time to pacify the bourgeoisie and to fool the workers. They put forward economic "plans" or a series of social demands, promising to defend the fatherland from external "fascism" to the extent that the national bourgeoisie will support their program. The purpose in thus posing the question consists in glossing over the question of the class character of the state, evading the problem of the conquest of power and, under the cover of a "socialist" plan, in dragging in the defense of the capitalist fatherland.

32. *The left centrists,* who are in turn distinguished by a great number of shadings (S.A.P. in Germany, O.S.P. in Holland, I.L.P. in England, the Zyromski and Marceau Pivert groups in France and others) arrive in words at the renunciation of the defense of the fatherland. But from this bare renunciation they do not draw the necessary practical conclusions. The greater half of their internationalism, if not nine tenths of it, bears a platonic character. They fear to break away from the right centrists; in the name of the struggle with "sectarianism" they carry on a struggle against Marxism, refuse to fight for a revolutionary International and continue to remain in the Second International at the head of which

stands the king's footman, Vandervelde. Expressing at certain moments the leftward shift of the masses, in the final analysis the centrists put a brake upon the revolutionary re-grouping within the proletariat and consequently also upon the struggle against war.

33. In its very essence centrism means half-heartedness and vacillation. But the problem of war is least of all favorable for the *policy* of vacillation. For the masses centrism is always only a short transition stage. The growing danger of war will make for ever sharper differentiation within the centrist groupings which now dominate the workers' movement. The proletarian vanguard will be the better armed for the struggle against war the sooner and more fully it will free its mind from the web of centrism. A necessary condition for success on this road is to pose clearly and irreconcilably all questions connected with war.

Soviet Diplomacy and the International Revolution

34. After the conquest of power the proletariat itself goes over to the position of the "defense of the fatherland". But this formula thenceforward acquires an entirely new historic content. The isolated workers' state is not a self-sufficing entity but only a *drill ground for the world revolution.* Defending the U. S. S. R., the proletariat defends not national boundaries but a socialist dictatorship temporarily hemmed in by national borders. Only a deep understanding of the fact that the proletarian revolution cannot find completion within the national framework; that without the victory of the proletariat in the leading countries all the successes of socialist construction in the U. S. S. R. are doomed to failure; that other than through the international revolution there is no salvation for any country in the world; that the socialist society can be built only on the basis of international cooperation,—only this firm conviction, penetrating into the very blood and marrow, can create a safe basis for revolutionary proletarian policy in time of war.

35. The foreign policy of the Soviets flowing from the theory of socialism in one country, that is, the actual ignoring of the problems of the international revolution, is based on two ideas: *general disarmament* and mutual *rejection of aggression.* That in search of diplomatic guarantees the Soviet government has to resort to a purely formalistic presentation of the problems of war and peace follows from the conditions of capitalist encirclement. But these methods of adaptation to the enemy, forced upon it by the feebleness of the international revolution and to a great extent by the

previous mistakes of the Soviet government itself, can by no means be raised into a universal system. But the acts and speeches of Soviet diplomacy, which have long transgressed the limit of unavoidable admissible practical compromises have been laid down as the sacred and inviolable basis for the international policy of the Third International and have become the source of the most flagrant pacifist illusions and social-patriotic blunders.

36. *Disarmament* is not a means against war, since, as the experience of Germany itself shows, episodic disarmament is only a stage on the road to new re-armament. The possibility of new and very rapid rearmament is inherent in modern industrial technique. "General" disarmament, even if it could be realized, would only mean the strengthening of the military superiority of the more powerful industrial countries. "Fifty percent disarmament" is not the road to complete disarmament but to absolute 100% re-armament. To present disarmament as "the only real means to prevent war" is to mislead the workers for the sake of a common front with petty-bourgeois pacifists.

37. We cannot for one moment dispute the right of the Soviet government to define with the greatest precision the term *aggression* in any given agreement with the imperialists. But to attempt to transform this conditional legalistic formula into a supreme regulator of international relations, is to substitute conservative criteria for revolutionary criteria, reducing the international policy of the proletariat to the defense of the existing annexations and borders set up by force.

38. We are not pacifists. We consider a revolutionary war just as much a means of proletarian policy as an uprising. Our attitude to war is determined not by the legalistic formula of "aggression" but by the question of which class carries on the war and for what aims. In the conflict of states, just as in the class struggle, "defense" and "aggression" are only questions of practical expediency and not of a juridical or ethical norm. The bare criterion of aggression creates a base of support for the social patriotic policy of Messrs. Leon Blum, Vandervelde and others, who thanks to Versailles, are given the possibility of defending imperialist booty under the guise of defending peace.

39. Stalin's famous formula "We do not want an inch of foreign soil but will not give up an inch of ours" represents a conservative program for the preservation of the status quo in radical contradiction to the aggressive nature of proletarian revolution. *The ideology of socialism in one country* leads inevitably to

the blurring of the reactionary role of the national state, to conciliation with it, to its idealization, to reducing the importance of revolutionary internationalism.

40. The leaders of the Third International justify the policy of Soviet diplomacy on the ground that the workers' state must *utilize the contradictions in the camp of imperialism.* This statement, indisputable in itself, needs concretization, however.

The foreign policy of each class is the continuation and development of its internal policy. If the proletariat in power must discern and utilize the contradictions in the camp of its external enemies, the proletariat which is still fighting for power, must know how to discern and utilize the contradictions in the camp of its internal enemies. The fact that the Third International proved absolutely incapable of understanding and utilizing the contradictions between reformist democracy and fascism led directly to the greatest defeat of the proletariat and brought it face to face with the danger of a new war.

On the other hand the contradictions between the imperialist governments must be utilized in no other way than from the point of view of the international revolution. The defense of the U. S. S. R. is conceivable only if the international proletarian vanguard be independent of the policy of Soviet diplomacy, if there be complete freedom to show up its nationalist conservative methods, which are directed against the interests of the international revolution and thus also against the interests of the Soviet Union.

U. S. S. R. and Imperialist Combinations

41. The Soviet government is now in the process of changing its course with regard to the *League of Nations.* The Third International, as usual, repeats slavishly the words and gestures of Soviet diplomacy. All sorts of "ultra-lefts" take advantage of this turn to relegate the Soviet Union once again among the bourgeois states. Social democracy, depending on its particular national considerations, interprets the "reconciliation" of the U.S.S.R. with the League of Nations as proof of the bourgeois nationalistic character of the policy of Moscow, or on the contrary, as the rehabilitation of the League of Nations and in general the whole ideology of pacifism. In this question, too, the Marxian point of view has nothing in common with any one of these petty bourgeois evaluations.

Our attitude in principle to the League of Nations does not differ from our attitude to each and every individual imperialist

state whether in or out of the League of Nations. The maneuvring of the Soviet state between the antagonistic groupings of imperialism presupposes a policy of maneuvre with regard to the League of Nations as well. So long as Japan and Germany were in the League the latter threatened to become an arena for agreement of the most important imperialist robbers at the expense of he U. S. S. R. After Japan and Germany, the most immediate and chief enemies of the Soviet Union, quit the League of Nations, it changed partly into a bloc of allies and vassels of French imperialism, partly into an arena of struggle among France, England and Italy. This or that combination with the League of Nations may be forced upon the Soviet state, steering between imperialist camps equaly hostile to it in essence.

42. Giving oneself a fully realistic account of the existing situation the proletarian vanguard must at the same time place in the foreground the following considerations:

a) the necessity for the U. S. S. R., sixteen and more years after the October overturn to seek a rapproachement with the League and to cover up this rapproachement with abstract pacifist formulæ is the result of the extreme *weakening of the international proletarian revolution* and by that of the international position of the U. S. S. R.

b) *abstract pacifist formulations* of Soviet diplomacy and its compliments directed to the League of Nations have nothing in common with the policy of the international proletarian party, which refuses to bear any responsibility for them, but on the contrary, exposes their hollowness and hypocrisy, the better to mobilize the proletariat on the basis of a clear understanding of actual forces and real antagonisms.

43. In the existing situation an *alliance of the U. S. S. R. with an imperialist state* or with one imperialist combination against another, in case of war, cannot at all be considered as excluded. Under the pressure of circumstances a temporary alliance of this kind may become an iron necessity, without ceasing, however, because of it, to be of the greatest danger both to the U. S. S. R. and to the world revolution.

The international proletariat will not decline to defend the U. S. S. R. even if the latter should find itself forced into a military alliance with some imperialists against others. But in this case, even more than in any other, the international proletariat must safeguard its complete political independence from Soviet diplomacy and thereby also from the bureaucracy of the Third International.

44. Remaining the determined and devoted defender of the workers' state in the struggle with imperialism the international proletariat will not, however, become an ally of the imperialist allies of the U. S. S. R. The proletariat of a capitalist country which finds itself in an alliance with the U. S. S. R. must retain fully and completely its irreconcilable *hostility to the imperialist government of its own country.* In this sense its policy will not differ from that of the proletariat in a country fighting against the U. S. S. R. But in the nature of practical actions considerable differences may arise depending on the concrete war situation. For instance, it would be absurd and criminal in case of war between the U. S. S. R. and Japan for the American proletariat to sabotage the sending of American munition to the U. S. S. R. But the proletariat of a country fighting against the U. S. S. R. would be absolutely obliged to resort to actions of this sort—strikes, sabotage, etc.

45. Intransigeant proletarian opposition to the imperialist ally of the U. S. S. R. must develop, on the one hand, on the basis of international class policy, on the other, on the basis of the imperialist aims of the given government, the treacherous character of this "alliance", its speculation on capitalist overturn in the U. S. S. R., etc. The policy of a proletarian party in an "allied" as well as in an enemy imperialist country should therefore be directed towards the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the seizure of power. Only in this way can a *real alliance with the U. S. S. R.* be created and the first workers' state be saved from disaster.

46. Within the U. S. S. R. war against imperialist intervention will unodubtedly provoke a veritable outburst of genuine fighting enthusiasm. All the contradictions and antagonisms will seem overcome or at any rate relegated to the background. The young generations of workers and peasants that emerged from the revolution will reveal on the field of battle a collossal dynamic power. Centralized industry, despite all its lacks and shortcomings, will reveal great superiority in serving war needs. The government of the U. S. S. R. has undoubtedly created great stores of food supplies sufficient for the first period of war. The general staffs of the imperialist states clearly realize, of course, that in the *Red Army they will meet a powerful adversary,* the struggle with whom will require long intervals of time and a terrific straining of forces.

47. But precisely the protracted nature of the war will inevitably reveal the contradictions of the transition economy of the

U. S. S. R. with its bureaucratic planning. The gigantic new enterprises may in many cases prove to be just so much dead capital. Under the influence of the government's acute need of supplies of first necessity, the individualistic tendencies of peasant economy will receive considerable strengthening, and the centrifugal forces within the kolkhozes will grow with each month of war. The rule of the uncontrolled bureaucracy will be transformed into a war dictatorship. The absence of a living party as a political controller and regulator will lead to an extreme accumulation and sharpening of contradictions. In the heated atmosphere of war one can expect sharp turns toward individualistic principles in agriculture and in handicraft industry, toward the attraction of foreign and "allied" capital, breaks in the monopoly of foreign trade, the weakening of governmental control over trusts, the sharpening of competition between the trusts, their conflicts with workers, etc. In the political sphere these processes may mean the completion of Bonapartism with the corresponding change or a number of changes in property relations. In other words, in case of a protracted war accompanied by the *passivity of the world proletariat* the internal social contradictions in the U. S. S. R. not only might lead but would have to lead to a *bourgeois-Bonapartist counter-revolution.*

48. The political conclusions flowing from this are obvious:

a) only the proletarian revolution in the West can save the U. S. S. R. as the workers' state in case of a long protracted war;

b) the preparation for a proletarian revolution in "friendly", "allied" as well as enemy countries is conceivable only with the complete independence of the world proletarian vanguard from the Soviet bureaucracy.

c) the unconditional support of the U. S. S. R. against the imperialist armies must go hand in hand with revolutionary Marxian criticism of the war and the diplomatic policy of the Soviet government, and with the formation inside of the U. S. S. R. of a real revolutionary party of Bolshevik-Leninists.

The Third International and War

49. Having abandoned a principled line on the war question, the Third International vacillates *between defeatism and social-patriotism.* In Germany the struggle against fascism was transformed into a market competition on a nationalistic basis. The slogan of "national liberation", advanced side by side with the slogan of "social liberation", grossly distorts the revolutionary perspective and leaves no place whatever for defeatism. On the

Saar question the Communist Party began by a cringing subservience to the ideology of national socialism and moved away from this only through inner splits.

What slogan will the German section of the Third International advance in time of war: "the defeat of Hitler is the lesser evil"? But if the slogan of national liberation was correct under the "fascists" Mueller and Bruening, how could it lose its efficacy under Hitler? Or are nationalist slogans good only for time of peace and not of war? Truly, the epigones of Leninism did *everything* to confuse themselves and the working class to the very end.

50. *The impotent revolutionism of the Third International* is a direct result of its fatal policy. After the German catastrophe the political insignificance of the so-called Communist parties was revealed in all countries where they were subjected to any test at all. The French section which showed itself absolutely incapable of rousing even a few tens of thousands of workers against the colonial robbery in Africa, will undoubtedly prove even more its bankruptcy in the moment of so-called "national danger".

51. The struggle against war, unthinkable without the revolutionary mobilization of the wide working masses of the city and village, demands at the same time direct influence on the *army and navy,* on the one hand, and on *transport* on the other. But it is impossible to influence soldiers without influencing the worker and peasant youth. Influence in the sphere of transport presupposes a strong foothold in the trade unions. Whereas meanwhile, with the aid of the Profintern, the Third International has lost all positions in the trade union movement and has cut itself off from all access to the working youth. Under these conditions to talk of a struggle against war is like blowing soap bubbles. There must be no room for illusions: in case of an imperialist attack on the U. S. S. R. the Third International will show itself a complete zero.

"Revolutionary" Pacifism and War

52. As an independent current petty bourgeois "left" *pacifism* starts from the premise that it is possible to insure peace by some particular, special means, outside of the class struggle of the proletariat, outside of the socialist revolution. By articles and speeches the pacifists inculcate "aversion to war", support the conscientious objectors, preach boycott and the general strike (or rather the myth of the general strike) against war. The more "revolutionary" pacifists are not averse even to talking at times of insurrection against war. But all and severally they have no conception of the

indissoluble bond connecting the insurrection with the class struggle and the policy of a revolutionary party. For them insurrection is just a literary threat directed at the ruling class and not a matter of long and persistent effort.

Exploiting the masses' natural love for peace and diverting it from its proper channels, the petty-bourgeois pacifists turn finally into unconscious supporters of imperialism. In case of war the overwhelming majority of the pacifist "allies" will be found in the camp of the bourgeoisie and will use the authority with which the Third International has clothed them by its ballyhoo for the patriotic disorienting of the proletarian vanguard.

53. *The Amsterdam congress* against war, as well as the *Paris congress* against fascism, organized by the Third International are classic examples of the replacement of revolutionary class struggle by the petty-bourgeois policy of ostentatious demonstrations, showy parades, Potemkin villages. On the morrow of the blatant protests against war *in general,* the heterogeneous elements artificially brought together by back-stage manipulation will scatter in all directions and will not lift even a little finger against the *particular* war.

54. The replacement of the united proletarian front, that is, of the fighting agreement of working class organizations, by a bloc of the Communist bureaucracy and the petty-bourgeois pacifists—in which to one honest confusionist there are dozens of careerists—leads to complete *eclecticism in question of tactics.* The Barbusse-Muenzenberg congresses consider it their special merit that they combine all types of "struggle" against war: humanitarian protests, individual refusal to serve in the army, education of "public opinion", the general strike and even insurrection. Methods which in life are in irreconcilable contradiction and which in practice can only be in conflict with each other, are presented as elements of an harmonious whole. The Russian "social-revolutionaries" who preached a "synthetic tactic" in the struggle against Czarism—alliance with liberals, individual terror and mass struggle—were an earnest lot compared with the inspirers of the Amsterdam bloc. But the workers must remember that Bolshevism was reared in the struggle against Populist eclecticism!

The Petty Bourgeosie and War

55. Peasants and the lower strata of the city population for whom war is no less disastrous than for the proletariat can be drawn most closely to the proletariat in the struggle against war.

Generally speaking, only in this way can war be prevented by insurrection. But even much less than workers will peasants let themselves be drawn to the revolutionary road by abstractions, ready-made patterns and bare command. The epigones of Leninism who brought about an overturn in the Comintern in the years 1923-24 under the slogan "face to the peasantry" revealed a complete inability to attract to the banner of communism not only peasants but even agricultural workers. *The Krestintern* (Peasants' International) expired quietly without even a funeral oration. The "conquest" of the peasantry of different countries, proclaimed so boastfully, proved in every case ephemeral, if not simply fanciful. Precisely in the sphere of peasant policy the bankruptcy of the Third International acquired an especially graphic character, although it really came as an inevitable consequence of the break between the Comintern and the proletariat.

The peasantry will take the road of revolutionary struggle against war only upon convincing itself in practice of the ability of the workers to lead this struggle. The key to victory rests, therefore, in the shops and factories. The revolutionary proletariat must become a real force before the peasantry and the small city folk will close ranks with it.

56. The petty bourgeoisie of the city and village is not homogeneous. The proletariat can attract to its side only its *lowest strata*s the poorest peasants, semi-proletarians, lower civil servants, peddlers, the oppressed and scattered folk who are deprived by all the conditions of their existence of the possibility of carrying on an independent struggle. Over this wide layer of the petty bourgeoisie there raise themselves up their tops, gravitating to the middle and big bourgeoisie and developing political careerists of democratic and pacifist, or of fascist type. While they remain in opposition these gentlemen resort to most unbridled demagogy as the surest means of later boosting their price in the eyes of the big bourgeoisie.

The crime of the Third International consists in substituting for the struggle for revolutionary influence on the real petty bourgeoisie, that is, on its *plebian masses,* theatrical blocs with its false pacifist leaders. Instead of discrediting the latter, it strengthens them by the prestige of the October revolution and makes the oppressed lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie political victims of the treacherous tops.

57. The revolutionary *road to the peasantry lies through the working class.* To gain the confidence of the village it is necessary

that the advanced workers themselves regain confidence in the banner of the proletarian revolution. This can be achieved only by a correct policy in general, by a correct anti-war policy in particular.

"Defeatism" and Imperialist War

58. In those cases where it is a question of conflict between capitalist countries, the proletariat of any one of them refuses categorically to sacrifice its historic interests, which in the final analysis coincide with the interests of the nation and humanity for the sake of the military victory of the bourgeoisie. Lenin's formula: *"defeat is the lesser evil"* means not that defeat of one's own country is the lesser evil as compared with the defeat of the enemy country; but that a military defeat resulting from the growth of the revolutionary movement is infinitely more beneficial to the proletariat and to the whole people than military victory assured by "civil peace". Karl Liebknecht gave an unsurpassed formula of proletarian policy in time of war: "The chief enemy of the people is in its own country". The victorious proletarian revolution will not only rectify the evils caused by defeat but will also create the final guarantee against future wars and defeats. This dialectic attitude toward war is the most important element of revolutionary training and therefore also of the sruggle against war.

59 *The transformation of imperialist war into civil war* is that general strategic task to which the whole work of a proletarian party during war should be subordinated. The consequences of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 as well as of the imperialist slaughter of 1914-18 (Paris Commune, the February and October revolutions in Russia, revolutions in Germany and Austria-Hungary, insurrections in a number of warring countries) testify irrefutably that a modern war between capitalist nations carries with it a war of classes within each of the nations, and that the task of a revolutionary party consists in preparing in this latter war the victory of the proletariat.

60. The experience of the years 1914-18 demonstrates at the same time that the *slogan of peace* is in no wise contradictory to the strategic formula of "defeatism", on the contrary, it develops a tremendous revolutionary force, especially in case of a protracted war. The slogan of peace has a pacifist, that is lying, stupefying, enfeebling character only when democratic and other politicians juggle with it; when priests offer up prayers for the speediest cessation of the slaughter; when "lovers of humanity", among

them also social-patriots, tearfully urge the governments to make peace quickly on "the basis of justice". But the slogan of peace has nothing in common with pacifism when it emanates from working class quarters and trenches, intertwining itself with the slogan of fraternization of the soldiers of the hostile armies and uniting the oppressed against the oppressors. The revolutionary struggle for peace which takes on ever wider and bolder forms is the surest means of "turning the imperialist war into a civil war".

War, Fascism and the Arming of the Proletariat

61. War demands "civil peace". Under the present conditions the bourgeoisie can achieve it only by means of *fascism.* Thus fascism has become the main political factor of war. The struggle against war presupposes the struggle against fascism. All sorts of revolutionary programs of struggle against war ("defeatism", "transformation of imperialist war into civil war", etc.) turn into empty sound, if the proletarian vanguard finds itself incapable of victoriously repelling fascism.

To demand of the bourgeois state the *disarming of fascist bands,* as the Stalinists do, is to take the road of the German social-democracy and Austro-Marxism. Precisely Wels and Otto Bauer "demanded" of the state that it disarm the Nazis and assure internal peace. "Democratic" government can, it is true—when it is to its advantage,—disarm individual fascist groups but only in order with all the greater ferocity to disarm the workers and prevent them from arming themselves. The very next day the bourgeois state will accord the fascists, only yesterday "disarmed", the possibility of arming themselves doubly and of bringing down with twofold strength their weapons on the unarmed proletariat. To turn to the state, that is to capital, with the demand to disarm the fascists means to sow the worst democratic illusions, to lull the vigilance of the proletariat, to demoralize its will.

62. Proceeding from the fact of the arming of fascist bands, correct revolutionary policy consists in creating *armed workers' detachments* for the purposes of self-defense, and in tirelessly calling the workers to arm themselves. Here is the centre of gravity of the whole present political situation. The social democrats, even the most left ones, that is, those who are ready to repeat general phrases of revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, carefully avoid the question of arming the workers, or openly declare this task "chimerical", adventurous, "romantic", etc. They propose instead (!) of arming the workers propaganda

among soldiers which they do not carry on in reality and which they are incapable of carrying on. Bare reference to work in the army is needed by the opportunists only in order to bury the question of the arming of the workers.

63. *The struggle for the army* is incontestably the greatest part of the struggle for power. Persistent and self-sacrificing work among the soldiers is the revolutionary duty of every truly-proletarian party. This work can be carried on with the assurance of success under the condition of the correctness of the general policy of the party in particular and especially among the youth. The agrarian program of the party and in general the system of transitional demands, touching the basic interests of the petty-bourgeois masses and opening up before them a perspective of salvation, has a tremendous importance for the success of the work in the army in the countries with a considerable peasant population.

64. It would be puerile, however, to believe that by propaganda alone the whole army can be won over to the side of the proletariat and thus in general make revolution unnecessary. The army is heterogeneous and its heterogeneous elements are chained by the iron hoops of discipline. Propaganda can create revolutionary cells in the army and prepare a sympathetic attitude among the most progressive soldiers. More than this propaganda and agitation cannot do. To depend upon the army defending the workers' organizations from fascism by its own initiative and even guaranteeing the transfer of power into the hands of the proletariat, is to substitute sugary illusions for the harsh lessons of history. The army in its decisive section can go over to the side of the proletariat in the epoch of revolution only in the event that the proletariat itself will have revealed to the army in action a *readiness and ability to fight for power* to the last drop of blood. Such struggle necessarily presupposes the arming of the proletariat.

65. The task of the bourgeoisie consists in preventing the proletariat from winning over the army. Fascism solves this task not without success by means of armed detachments. The *immediate, urgent, present-day* task of the proletariat consists not in seizing power but in the defense of its organizations from fascist bands, at a certain distance behind which stands the capitalist state. Whoever asserts that the workers have no possibility of arming themselves, proclaims by that that the workers are defenseless before fascism. Then there is no need to speak of socialism, of proletarian revolution, of struggle against war. Then the communist program should be scrapped and a cross marked over Marxism.

66. Not a revolutionary but an impotent pacifist, tomorrow's capitulator to fascism and to war can pass up the task of arming the workers. In itself the task of arming is entirely solvable, as history testifies. If the workers will really understand that it is a question of life and death they will obtain weapons. To explain to them the political situation, hiding or minimizing nothing, and chasing out every consolatory lie, is the first duty of a revolutionary party. Indeed, how can one defend himself against the mortal enemy if not by having two knives for every fascist knife and two revolvers for every revolver? There is and there can be no other answer.

67. Where should the weapons be gotten? First of all from the fascists. The *disarming of fascists* is a shameful slogan when it is addressed to the bourgeois police. The *disarming of fascists* is an excellent slogan when it is addressed to revolutionary workers. But fascist arsenals are not the only source. The proletariat has hundreds and thousands of channels for self-defense. We must not forget that it is precisely the workers and only they who with their own hands, make all sorts of weapons. It is only necessary for the proletarian vanguard to understand clearly that we cannot evade the task of self-defense. A revolutionary party must take upon itself the initiative in arming fighting workers' detachments. And for this it must first of all cleanse itself of all sorts of scepticism, indecision and pacifist reasoning in the question of arming the workers.

68. The slogan of a *workers' militia,* or of detachments of self-defense has a revolutionary meaning insofar as it is a question of an armed militia, otherwise the militia is reduced to a theatrical display, to a parade, and consequently to self-delusion. Of course, the arming will be primitive at the beginning. The first workers' detachments will have neither howitzers, nor tanks, nor aeroplanes. But on the 6th of February, in Paris, in the centre of a powerful militarist country, bands armed with revolvers and razors on sticks were not far from taking the Bourbon palace and brought about the fall of the government. Tomorrow similar bands can sack the offices of proletarian newspapers or trade union headquarters. The strength of the proletariat lies in its numbers. Even the most primitive weapon in the hands of the masses can perform miracles. Under favorable conditions it may open a road to more perfected weapons.

69. The slogan of a *united front* degenerates into a centrist phrase, if it is not supplemented under the present conditions by

propaganda and practical application of definite methods of struggle against fascism. The united front is needed first of all for the creation of local committees of defense. The committees of defense are needed for the building and uniting of detachments of workers' militia. These detachments must at the very start look for and find weapons. Detachments for self-defense—are only a stage in the matter of arming the proletariat. In general revolution knows no other roads.

Revolutionary Policy Against War

70. The first prerequisite for success is the *training of party cadres* in the correct understanding of all the conditions of imperialist war and of all the political processes that accompany it. Woe to that party which confines itself in this burning question to general phrases and abstract slogans! The bloody events will crash over its head and smash it.

It is necessary to set up special circles for the study of the political experiences of the war of 1914-18 (ideological preparations for war by the imperialists, misleading of public opinion by military headquarters through the patriotic press, the role of the anti-thesis defense-attack; groupings in the proletarian camp, the isolation of the Marxist elements, etc. etc.)

71. For a revoluionary party the *moment of declaration of war* is especially critical. The bourgeois and social-patriotic press in an alliance with the radio and movies will pour out upon the toiling masses torrents of chauvinistic poison. Even the most revolutionary and tempered party cannot as a whole resist this. The present thoroughly falsified history of the Bolshevik parties does not serve in the realistic preparation of the advanced workers for the test, but lulls them into passive impotence by an invented ideal form.

Despite the fact that Czarist Russia could by no stretch of imagination have been considered either as a democracy or as the bearer of culture, nor finally, as belonging to the defensive side, the Bolshevik fraction of the Duma together with the Menshevik fraction issued at the beginning a social-patriotic declaration diluted with pink pacifist internationalism. The Bolshevik fraction soon took a more revolutionary position but at the trial of the fraction all the accused deputies and their theoretic guide Kamenev, with the exception of Muranov, categorically differentiated themselves from the defeatist theory of Lenin. The illegal work of the party almost died down at the beginning. Only gradually did the

revolutionary leaflets begin to appear which rallied the workers under the banner of internationalism, without, however, advancing defeatist slogans.

The first two years of the war greatly undermined the patriotism of the masses and moved the party to the left. But the February revolution, having transformed Russia into a "democracy", gave rise to a new powerful wave of "revolutionary" patriotism. The overwhelming majority of the leaders of the Bolshevik party did not withstand it even then. In March 1917 Stalin and Kamenev imparted to the central party organ a social-patriotic direction. On this basis a rapproachment and in the majority of cities even a direct fusion of Bolshevik and Menshevik organizations occured. Protests by the firmest revolutionists, chiefly in the advanced districts of Petrograd, were needed; the arrival of Lenin in Russia and his irreconcilable struggle against social-patriotism were needed to straighten out the party's internationalist front. Such was the case with the best, most revolutionary and tempered party.

72. The study of the historic experience of Bolshevism has an invaluable educational importance for the advanced workers: it shows them the terrific force of the pressure of bourgeois public opinion that they will have to withstand and teaches them at the same time not to despair, not to sheath weapons, not to lose courage despite complete isolation at the beginning of war.

It is necessary to study no less carefully the political alignments within the proletariat of other countries, both those that participated in the war and those that remained neutral. Of special significance is the experience of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht in Germany where events took a different course than in Russia but in the final analysis led to the same conclusion: that *it is necessary to learn to swim against the current.*

73. It is necessary to follow closely *the patriotic preparation of cannon fodder* now proceeding: the diplomatic fencing which has as its aim the laying of responsibility on the other side; the treacherous formulas of open and hidden social-patriots preparing for themselves a bridge from pacifism to militarism; the hollow slogans of the "Communist" leaders who will be just as bewildered on the first day of war as the German "leaders" on the night of the Reichstag fire.

74. It is necessary to gather carefully the most characteristic clippings from official government and opposition articles and speeches, comparing them with the experience of the previous war; to foretell what direction the further work of fooling the people

will take; to strengthen these predictions later by the array of facts; to teach the proletarian vanguard to *orient itself independently in events* so as not to be taken unawares.

75. Reinforced agitation against imperialism and militarism must proceed not from abstract formulas but from concrete facts which strike the masses. It is necessary painstakingly to expose not only the open military budget, but also *all the masked forms of militarism,* not leaving without a protest war maneuvres, military furnishings, orders, etc.

Through well-trained workers it is necessary to raise the question of the war danger and of struggle against it in all organiations of the proletariat without exception and in the labor press, demanding from the leaders clear and definite answers to the question: what to do?

76. To gain the confidence of the *youth* it is necessary not only to declare a fight to the finish upon morally corrupting social democracy and upon the dull bureaucratism of the Third International, but also to actually create an international organization basing itself on the critical thought and revolutionary initiative of the young generation.

It is necessary to arouse the working youth against all kinds and forms of its militarization by the bourgeois state. Simultaneously, it must be mobilized and militarized in the interests of the revolution (committees of defense against fascism, red fighting detachments, workers' militia, struggle for the arming of the proletariat).

77. To conquer revolutionary positions in the *trade unions* and other working class mass organizations, it is necessary to break pitilessly with bureaucratic ultimatism, to take the workers where they are and as they are, and to lead them forward from partial tasks to general ones, from defense to attack, from patriotic prejudices to the overthrow of the bourgeois state.

Since the summits of trade union bureaucracy in the majority of countries represent essentially an unofficial part of the capitalist police, a revolutionist must know how to fight irreconcilably against it, combining legal activity with illegal, fighting courage with conspirative prudence.

Only by these combined methods can we succeed in rallying the working class, and in the first place the youth, to the revolutionary banner, blaze a trail to the capitalist barracks and arouse all the oppressed.

78. The struggle against war can acquire a genuinely wide, mass character only if the *working women and peasant women*

take part in it. The bourgeois degeneration of the social democracy as well as the bureaucratic deterioration of the Third International have delivered the hardest blow to the most oppressed and disfranchised strata of the proletariat; that is, first of all to the working women. To awaken them, gain their confidence, show them the true road, means to mobilize against imperialism the revolutionary passions of the most downtrodden part of humanity.

Anti-militarist work among women must in particular safeguard the replacement of mobilized men by revolutionary working women to whom, in case of war, a great part of party and trade-union work must inevitably pass.

79. If the proletariat should find it beyond its power to prevent war by means of revolution,—and this is the only means of preventing war,—the workers, together with the whole people will be forced to *participate in the army and in war.* Individualistic and anarchistic slogans of refusal to undergo military service, passive resistance, desertion, sabotage are in basic contradiction to the methods of the proletarian revolution. But just as in the factory the advanced worker feels himself a slave of capital, preparing for his liberation, so in the capitalist army too he feels himself a slave of imperialism. Compelled today to give his muscles and even his life, he does not surrender his revolutionary consciousness. He remains a fighter, learns how to use arms, explains even in the trenches the class meaning of war, groups around himself the discontented, connects them into cells, transmits the ideas and slogans of the party, watches closely the changes in the mood of the masses, the subsidence of the patriotic wave, the growth of indignation, and summons the soldiers to the aid of the workers at the critical moment.

The Fourth International and War

80. The struggle against war presupposes a revolutionary instrument of struggle, that is, a *party.* There is none now either on a national or on an international scale. A revolutionary party must be built on the basis of the entire experience of the past, including the experiences of the Second and Third Internationals. The renunciation of open and direct struggle for the new International means conscious or unconscious support of the two existing Internationals, of which one will actively support the war, the other being capable only of disorganizing and weakening the proletarian vanguard.

81. It is true, not a few honest revolutionary workers remain

in the ranks of the so-called Communist parties. The persistency with which they hold on to the Third International is in many cases to be explained by misdirected revolutionary devotion. They can be attracted to the banner of the new International not by concessions, not by adaptation to prejudices inculcated in them but, on the contrary, by a systematic unmasking of the fatal international role of *Stalinism* (bureaucratic centrism). Thereby the questions of war must be posed with particular clarity and intransigeance.

82. At the same time it is necessary to follow attentively the inner struggle in the reformist camp and attract in time the *left socialist groupings* developing towards revolution to a struggle against war. The best criterion of the tendencies of a given organization is its attitude in practice, in action, toward national defense and toward colonies, especially in those cases in which the bourgeoisie of a given country owns colonial slaves. Only a complete and real break with official public opinion on the most burning question of the "defense of the fatherland" signifies a turn, or at least the beginning of a turn from bourgeois positions to proletarian positions. The approach to left organiations of this type should be accompanied by friendly criticism of all indecision in their policy and by a joint elaboration of all theoretical and practical questions of war.

83. There are not a few politicians in the working class movement who recognize, at least in words, the failure of the Second and Third Internationals but consider at the same time that *"this is not the time" to start building a new International.* Such a position is characteristic not of a revolutionary Marxist but of a disillusioned Stalinist or disappointed reformist. The revolutionary struggle does not suffer interruption. The conditions for it may not be favorable today; but a revolutionary who cannot swim against the current is not a revolutionary. To say that the building of the new International is "untimely" is the same as to declare that the class struggle, and in particular the struggle against war, is untimely. In the present epoch proletarian policy cannot but place before itself international tasks. International tasks cannot but demand the welding together of international cadres. This work cannot be deferred even for one day without capitulation to imperialism.

84. Of course, no one can predict just when the war will break out and at what stage it will find the building of new parties and of the Fourth International. We must do everything possible to

make the preparation for the proletarian revolution move faster than the preparation for a new war. It is very possible, however, that this time also imperialism will overtake the revolution. But even this road, portending great sacrifices and calamities, in no case relieves us of the duty of *building the new International immediately.* The transformation of the imperialist war into proletarian revolution will proceed all the faster the further advanced our preparatory work will be, the firmer the revolutionary cadres at the very beginning of war, the more systematically they carry on work in all warring countries and the more firmly their work is based on correct strategic tactical and organizational principles.

85. At its first blow the imperialist war will smash the decrepit spine of the Second International and will split its national sections into bits. It will reveal to the bottom the hollowness and impotence of the Third International. But then neither will it spare all those indecisive centrist groupings which evade the problem of the International, which seek purely national roots, do not carry any one question to its conclusion, are devoid of perspective and temporarily feed on the ferment and confusion of the working class.

Even if at the beginning of a new war the true revolutionists should again find themselves in a small minority, we cannot doubt for a single moment that this time the shift of the masses to the road of revolution will occur much faster, more decisively and relentlessly than during the first imperialist war. A new wave of insurrections can and must become victorious in the whole capitalist world.

It is indisputable at any rate that in our epoch only that organization which bases itself on international principles and enters into the ranks of the world party of the proletariat can root itself in the national soil. The *struggle against war means now the struggle for the Fourth International!*

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